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# Kimbanguism, Garveyism, and Rebellious Rumor Making in Post–World War I Africa

Adam Ewing

*In the spring of 1921, a young Kongo prophet named Simon Kimbangu launched a revival that won thousands of followers and posed a growing threat to Belgian rule in the Congo. This article examines the dynamic confluence of the Kimbanguist revival and the spread of Garveyism along the west coast of Africa. Scholarly treatments of Kimbanguism have not satisfactorily explained this connection, in large part because Garveyism has been traditionally miscast as an American-centered doctrine of immediate liberation rather than a malleable and portable diasporic movement that acquired a uniquely African cast as a result of its spread through the subcontinent. In the Belgian Congo, Garveyism provided an organizational spark that aided the emergence of Kimbangu's church. Perhaps more consequentially, the spread of Garveyism through the region facilitated the emergence of rumors that conditioned the manner in which both Africans and Europeans perceived and responded to the revival. Viewing Garveyism from this perspective helps us understand why it was such a vibrant politics during the interwar period. It also suggests the broader utility of diasporic identifications and ideas as potentially emancipatory materials for local politics making.*

*Keywords:* Africa; Belgian Congo; Diaspora; Garveyism; Kimbanguism; Marcus Garvey; rumor; Universal Negro Improvement Association

In the spring of 1921, a young MuKongo Christian named Simon Kimbangu announced that he had been called to heal and preach in the name of the Lord, broke from his European mission, and inaugurated his own independent African ministry. As accounts of Kimbangu's miraculous healing powers spread, thousands flocked to his village, Nkamba, which became known as "Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> European observers, at first delighted by Kimbangu's assault on traditional beliefs, soon became alarmed by reports of Kimbanguist prophets urging people not to work for

whites, nor to pay taxes to the state.<sup>2</sup> Stories swirled that Kimbangu had declared the true God to be black, and that he had called for whites to be expelled from the Lower Congo, or perhaps thrown into the sea. Observers noted the peculiar similarity between these extreme utterances and the propaganda of the “American agitator,” Marcus Garvey, who had hosted his spectacular international convention in New York just months earlier.<sup>3</sup>

After a hasty investigation, colonial officials set out to arrest Kimbangu, but the prophet was able to escape, and went underground for three months. Now a real atmosphere of crisis set in. As economic production ground to a halt, Belgian administrators instituted what one observer described as a “military occupation,” holding dozens of Kimbanguists without trial or examination, and setting soldiers loose in the countryside.<sup>4</sup> Officials were convinced that Kimbanguists had been led to the brink of rebellion, as Territorial Administrator Léon-Georges Morel put it, by “the pan-African movement which prevails in America.” And indeed, among Kimbanguists there was a widespread belief that the Belgians would be driven from the Congo by an arriving black American army. One popular version imagined the arrival of a great ship sailing up the Congo River, which would portend the end of white rule—what seems to be a garbled reference to Garvey’s well-known Black Star Line. Thomas Moody, an American missionary stationed near the rail line, reported that the workers were “thrilled at the chance to join the movement initiated by Marcus Garvey.” Or, as Father J.C. Van Cleemput of the Redemptorist Mission concluded, “the battle cry of the [Kimbanguist] movement ... [is] to found a prophetic religion, a Negro religion, to destroy the whites and expel them, to gain independence: in a word, ‘Africa for the Africans.’”<sup>5</sup>

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African Garveyism—not unlike Garveyism in general—was once viewed through the prism of the oversized schemes and ambitions of its namesake.<sup>6</sup> Focus settled on the failed negotiations between Garvey’s organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the government of Liberia to establish a UNIA settlement near Monrovia.<sup>7</sup> This in turn encouraged the belief that Garvey was the purveyor of a futile and retrograde “Back to Africa” politics. And indeed, during the UNIA’s Liberian colonization efforts of 1919–21 and 1923–24 Garveyites dutifully enacted the well-worn tropes of emigration movements dating to the 18th century, envisioning a cadre of Westernized and Christianized African Americans and Afro-West Indians returning “home” to rebuild fallen Africa, armed with the skills acquired during their trials abroad and guided by the hand of Providence.<sup>8</sup>

In recent years, however, scholars have revived efforts to redraw the routes of African Garveyism away from American supporters’ aspirational visions of their “Motherland” and toward the multifaceted and dynamic spread of the movement in African communities themselves.<sup>9</sup> As much as Garvey hoped to oversee a grand Negro empire in Africa, the needs of the moment invited other opportunities and possibilities. In practice, Garveyism was transmitted across the continent less as an

appendage of the UNIA than as an organic vehicle of network-building and consciousness-raising, a decentralized complex of information, ideas, and associations that encouraged local initiative toward the work of a common, global project of African and racial redemption. Garveyite organizers and sympathizers carried with them a series of broad and relatively fixed assumptions: a view of the “Negro race” as a unified and ancient category of belonging; a belief that African redemption and Negro redemption were coterminous and Biblically ordained; a faith that the mobilization of a scattered people through organizational, economic, and religious congress would hasten their liberation; and an understanding of history that suggested a declining white civilization and an ascendant Negro one. These beliefs were sufficiently dramatic to demand action, while remaining capacious enough to ensure that the work done on their behalf would be malleable, adaptable to changing circumstances and fortunes, amenable to local and regional innovations. Across Africa, Garveyism was embraced by a dynamic and mobile group of primarily English-speaking, mission-educated men, and articulated as a politics that avoided direct and vocal confrontations with European rulers, advocated inward-looking programs of institution-building and racial self-help, and became manifest in vehicles of political association and independent Christianity, commercial pan-Africanism and ethnic nationalism.<sup>10</sup>

More explosively, Garveyism filtered into popular consciousness through—and was given unpredictable shape by—broad “genres” of rumor and periodic eruptions of millennial prophesizing.<sup>11</sup> In South Africa, where, as Helen Bradford has observed, “‘common sense’ was Garveyized and Garveyism was domesticated,” the UNIA developed a talismanic power that proved meaningful and useful to activists of national organizations like the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU) and the African National Congress (ANC), regional aspirants like the charismatic herbalist and pan-Africanist Wellington Butelezi, and revivalists like Enoch Mgijima’s Israelites and followers of the prophetess Nontetha Nkwekwe.<sup>12</sup> Across the country, and then throughout the vast southern-central African region—aided by the migrant labor networks that carried people, goods, and news—emerged the widespread belief among peasants and itinerant workers that Biblical justice would sweep white rule from the continent and that black American liberators would play the part of avenging angels. These rumors surfaced in areas of dense Garveyite organizing such as the Eastern Cape, where Wellington told his followers that at the appointed hour “General Garvey” and his army of black Americans would rain balls of burning charcoal on whites and non-believers from warplanes above, and in the protectorate of South West Africa (now Namibia), where extensive UNIA organizing on the coast and in the interior generated the belief among Herero Christians that an American fleet was en route to drive away the Europeans.<sup>13</sup> But rumors of black American liberators also followed Garveyite information networks to their frontiers: Among Watchtower adherents in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and, for our purposes, among Kimbanguists in the Lower Congo.<sup>14</sup>

Considerations of the spread and influence of Garveyism during Kimbangu's revival have tended to hinge on whether Kimbanguism was sparked from abroad or developed on home soil. One group of scholars has extrapolated revolutionary consequences from the presence of Garveyism in the Congo, particularly the circulation the UNIA's official organ, the *Negro World*, among a rising generation of mission-educated *évolues* in Léopoldville (now Kinshasa), including Kimbangu and André Yengo, who later became the primary financial backer of Kimbangu's nascent church. A second camp, led by the anthropologist Wyatt MacGaffey, the foremost American scholar of Lower Congo society and culture, bristles at the implication that the Kimbanguist revival was initiated by a "Garveyite conspiracy," and expresses concern that such a reading merely fuels the well-worn and patronizing assumption that anti-colonial initiative in Africa grew out of external forces rather than local political and cultural currents.<sup>15</sup>

The new work on Garveyism in Africa allows us to move past this binary because it suggests a mode of diasporic transmission that was co-produced across different "spatial scopes."<sup>16</sup> If Garveyism was carried to Africa from abroad, it became meaningful to the extent that it could serve as a useful conduit of local politics, and be shaped and directed on the ground. As some of the best theoretical work on the African diaspora has suggested, "diasporic practice" implies not only mobility and transnationality but also rootedness and place.<sup>17</sup> Diasporic identities and political formations do not work outside and around bounded communities, but must rather be articulated "through place and localness."<sup>18</sup> If Kimbanguism was grounded in the exigencies of colonial politics in the Belgian Congo, and legible in the context of cultural understandings rooted in precolonial Kongo cosmology, the emergence and trajectory of the revival also reflected global forces set in motion by the First World War, and by the efforts of Garveyites and other anti-colonial activists to bring about the end of white supremacy. In the case of Garveyism, the exchange was reciprocal: local manifestations of the movement, in the Lower Congo and elsewhere, invited a reconsideration of tactics and perspective from Garvey and his officers in Harlem.

Following the swirling rumors that accompanied the spread of Garveyism to Africa offers a means to enrich our understanding of the anti-colonial ferment generated during and following the Great War. Erez Manela's brilliant account of the political upheaval stimulated by the war, and by the widely disseminated and variably translated pronouncements of American president Woodrow Wilson, acknowledges the influence of the "Wilsonian moment" on broad "publics" spread throughout the colonial world, but nevertheless settles on case studies that chart "four emergent nations"—Egypt, India, China, and Korea—and on subjects that were literate, Western-educated, "modern" elites.<sup>19</sup> Marcus Garvey, too, was conversant in the modern idioms of international relations and nation building, and his movement was ignited by the recognition among peoples of African descent that the principle of self-determination did not—and would not for the distant future—apply to subjects with black skin. But Garveyism, like the pan-African

tradition from which it emerged, also proffered a fertile resource for popular forms of knowledge production.<sup>20</sup> As Garveyism spread across the globe, to the great dismay and concern of colonial officials, it engaged publics unlike the ones charted by Manela but no less enmeshed in the global struggle to define the scope, length, and nature of colonial rule after the war.

The spread of Garveyite rumors in the Belgian Congo was explosive because it merged prophetic streams of radical anti-colonialism, the diasporic stream adding authority to the local one. Prophetic politics—what Anthony Bogues has called the “redemptive prophetic” tradition in black radical intellectual thought—posed an existential threat to colonial order because it invoked an authority that resided not within the “totalizing knowledge regime” of the colonial state but rather within indigenous forms of knowledge and culture.<sup>21</sup> In the same manner that Garvey’s call of “Africa for the Africans” pierced the logic of European tutelage and signaled the arrival of a coming Golden Age for Africa, Kimbangu’s healing powers imbued him with the guiding light of the Holy Spirit, catalyzed deep-rooted BaKongo understandings about spiritual authority, and foretold the renewal of the Kingdom of Kongo. Rumors of the imminent arrival of black American liberators infused the prophetism of Kimbangu and his followers with a powerful diasporic sanction.<sup>22</sup> As in other parts of Africa and the Americas, Garvey’s message of a world turned upside-down fueled local iterations of race consciousness and anti-colonialism.

Following Garveyite rumors allows us to glimpse the ways in which these merging streams of intellectual production are articulated *in place* and *within* relations of power. As the historian Luise White has suggested, the search for linear, textual forms of evidence can draw undue attention to the intellectual worlds of particular actors and away from the social worlds within which they reside.<sup>23</sup> The study of rumor, on the other hand, compels us to examine the manner in which ideas travel through space, to consider how they are understood and made meaningful through communal and negotiated acts of interpretation.<sup>24</sup> If, as Roland Barthes has argued, “to give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing,” the spread of rumor remains, in Ranajit Guha’s words, “a receptacle of new inputs and meaning.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed, to limit our understanding of transnational ideas to direct intellectual exchanges is to ignore a far richer history of their spread. Charting the articulation and uses of rumor reveals a fluid space of “opinion-in-formation” that gestures to a mass-based politics of diaspora rather than an elite-driven one.<sup>26</sup> It allows us to recognize the impact of Garveyist transnationalism in the Belgian Congo and elsewhere by acknowledging the social imaginary that it helped produce.

Extravagant rumors and prophecies of upheaval and revolution created a shared discourse through which both the colonial state and Kimbanguists came to understand the implications of the revival. In a classic review of the literature on religion and politics in sub-Saharan Africa, Terence Ranger cautions us to be wary of putting too much stock in the “paranoi[a]c fears” of colonial agents, who often worried excessively and unnecessarily about the sinister influence of outside agitators.<sup>27</sup> But these beliefs—

whether paranoiac or not—had great consequence in dictating the terms by which colonial agents and colonial subjects encountered each other. The wartime and post-war narrative of an anti-imperial “rising tide of color” both conditioned the response of colonial agents to evidence of sedition and offered a vocabulary through which seditious expressions could be mediated.<sup>28</sup> By couching their protest in the language of rumor and revivalism—encouraged by the millennial expectation of black American liberators—Kimbanguists engaged in a dialogue that both identified local opportunities as well as the global currents swirling around them. If Garveyism presented a Westernized conception of diasporic awakening and prophetic deliverance, it also offered Africans in the Lower Congo useful raw material for the performance of their own, homegrown prophetic traditions. The political consciousness that emerged echoed Garveyist rumors across the continent and nearly precisely confirmed local understandings about black Americans, their return to Africa, the resurrection of the King of the Kongo, and the end of white rule.

### **Garveyism in West Africa**

Garveyism reached the Lower Congo not from southern-central Africa but via a parallel network of information transmission and organizing that carried Garveyist information along the West African coast and to remote outposts hundreds of miles into the hinterland. News of the movement began filtering through well-connected channels in 1919, but it was the UNIA’s first International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World, a month-long gathering held in August 1920, that became the watershed.<sup>29</sup> By the end of 1920, in the words of one observer, “a great wave of Garveyism broke over the West Coast.”<sup>30</sup> Copies of the *Negro World* flowed into port towns, carried by sailors, sent through the mail by trans-Atlantic correspondents, disseminated by local agents.<sup>31</sup> Organizers traveled up and down the coast, passing through and distributing literature in Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Togo, Dahomey (now Benin), Nigeria, and Cameroon.<sup>32</sup> Aided by the expansion of the railway and the fluidity of labor migration, word of the movement spread far inland, especially in northern Nigeria. A *Negro World* correspondent from Minna remarked on the enthusiasm for the UNIA throughout the region, and asked for instructions on how to mobilize support for the organization in a territory where it was not officially established. Another correspondent, from Zaria, frustrated by the slow pace at which the *Negro World* circulated, recommended a local owner of a merchandise shop to act as an official agent and distributor of the paper. The *Negro World* was discovered in Kano, Benue (Munshi), and Ilorin provinces, and a division of the UNIA may have been briefly established at Kano. Working as a colonial agent in a remote outpost in northern Nigeria, a journey of several days from the nearest telegraph office and even further from the railway, the future novelist Joyce Cary was surprised to learn that the local markets were full of excited talk about a black



king, commanding an iron ship full of black officers and crew, and preparing to drive the whites out of Africa.<sup>33</sup>

Garveyites established six UNIA divisions in British West Africa, two in Liberia, and two—briefly and secretly—in Senegal.<sup>34</sup> But as was the case in other parts of the continent, the influence of the movement was manifest to a greater degree outside of the official edifice of the organization. The merits of the UNIA were fiercely debated in the pages of African-run newspapers like the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, the *Times of Nigeria*, and the *Gold Coast Leader*<sup>35</sup>; in informal discussion groups, like the one organized by Jacob Akinpelu Obisesan in Ibadan<sup>36</sup>; and within political organizations like the pathbreaking National Congress of British West Africa, whose vice president and Gold Coast delegate, J. Casely Hayford, continued to receive smuggled copies of the *Negro World* from friends in the United States and the West Indies long after the paper was officially banned throughout much of the region.<sup>37</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, the future president of independent Nigeria, learned of the UNIA from a fellow student while he was studying at the Hope Waddell Institute in Calabar. French authorities worried about newspaper stories “spread through the grapevine” in Dakar schools and carried by students back to their villages and colonies of origin. One official, suggesting that Garvey’s slogans were “more dangerous than rifles,” urged vigilance, but conceded that there were “no walls thick enough” to stop the spread of informal rumor and gossip. As a writer for the *Cape Argus* complained in 1923, “[a]t almost every West African port the inquisitive voyager has only to get into the ‘black quarter’ and to scratch a little below the surface to find signs of the organization.”<sup>38</sup>

It was in the midst of this ferment that Garveyism was first discovered in the Congo. In October 1920, Belgian authorities arrested an African clerk named “Wilson,” in Lisala, after learning that he was working in the colony as a UNIA agent. Wilson was a British subject, in the employ of the African and Eastern Trade Corporation; although at first believed by the Belgians to be a native of the Gold Coast, and later a black American, it is almost certain, as French intelligence officers later concluded, that he was Wilfred Ascanius Indouishi Wilson, a native of Porto-Novo, Dahomey, born to Sierra Leonean parents. After working in French Guinea (Guinea) and the Gambia, Wilson arrived in Rufisque, Senegal, in 1916, where he was employed by the commercial firm, Barthès and Lesieur. There he met Francis Emeric Webber, a native of Sierra Leone working in nearby Dakar. Webber, who frequently traveled south to the Gambia and Sierra Leone, returned to Dakar at some point in 1919 or 1920 with news of the UNIA. By the time Wilson traveled to the Belgian Congo, the two men had established a secret division of the organization in Dakar, under the cover of a commercial business enterprise. Stationed in the Congo, Wilson established a subscription to the *Negro World*, which he distributed among fellow migrant and Kongo workers in Léopoldville, the colony’s capital and urban hub. Judging by his arrest in Lisala, a several days’ journey from the capital, Wilson was intent on spreading news of the UNIA broadly. In his possession in Lisala was found a copy of the UNIA’s



constitution, along with a letter, written by Webber, announcing that a great organization had been formed in the United States to redeem the Negro race; that Africans, at the Cape and elsewhere, had pledged their participation; and that the movement would be firmly entrenched in the Congo by December.<sup>39</sup>

Wilson's brief organizing work in the Congo established a foundation for Garveyist consciousness in the Belgian colony. Over the next few years, UNIA material and information continued to filter into Léopoldville, carried by "bearers of the black word" from British and French West Africa, who joined the "invasion" of skilled workers hired to fill positions in European firms as mechanics, carpenters, ironworkers, and clerks.<sup>40</sup> Dakar, which served as a major recruitment center, had emerged by the end of 1921 as a hotbed of illicit Garveyist organizing.<sup>41</sup> In Rufisque and Dakar, Wilson, Webber, and several associates originally from Sierra Leone—many connected by their employment by the Elder Dempster Shipping Company—continued their quiet work on behalf of the UNIA, distributing copies of the *Negro World* along with propaganda leaflets advertising for the organization and for the Black Star Line. In early May 1922, the UNIA's "traveling commissioner," John Kamara, established a division at Dakar, and a month later, Wilson wrote to the UNIA's Secretary-General in New York, requesting official sanction for a second division in Rufisque.<sup>42</sup>

For members of the Dakar and Rufisque divisions, Garveyism was galvanizing because it encouraged them to view their ostensibly localized and modest work of resistance against vast imperial powers as part of a global movement of world-historical significance and of inexorable, gathering strength. "If we cannot do much here under French Colonial Administration, we can do our utmost to further the universal aims of the association by our moral and financial support," explained John Henry Farmer, secretary of the Dakar division. The UNIA had sounded an alarm "reverberating through the [N]egro communities scattered in the five great continents; and the oppressors beholding this strange spectacle are arrayed to stem the tide; but, the cup of affliction is full and running over, the march is steady, impregnable and firm." The stakes were clear: "victory or death; Africa free or the annihilation of 400,000,000 [N]egroes with their backs to the wall." Africa, assured Farmer, had "heard the call to unity" and was "rising to a man."<sup>43</sup>

Carried from the United States to British colonies on the west coast of Africa, forwarded to migrant workers stationed in French West Africa, Garveyist propaganda found a circuitous means of dispersal into the heart of the Congo. After the discovery—and destruction—of the UNIA in Senegal, officials in Dakar were left grumbling about "the curious spectacle ... of the existence of a movement presumably of anti-European character, originating among negroes in the United States, sternly repressed in eleven French Colonies, and indulgently tolerated" in the British colonies.<sup>44</sup>

### **The Rise of Kimbanguism**

What do we know happened in that year [1918]? Large numbers of people died and not by the will of God. —Kimbanguist catechism<sup>45</sup>

When Simon Kimbangu's revival broke in April 1921, it was at the height of this Garveyist organizing. It was also a time of fraying order for reasons that fell particularly hard on the Congo. During the traumatic years of the Congo Free State (1885–1908), profits in ivory and rubber were ruthlessly pursued using the tools of forced labor, kidnapping, mutilation, and mass murder. The transfer of the colony to the Belgian state in 1908 mitigated some of the worst and most visible brutalities of King Leopold II's regime, but did not end practices of forced labor and corporal punishment, and conditions of depopulation, famine, and social disintegration. World War I invited a further series of plagues upon the Congolese. During the grueling East African Campaign, tens of thousands succumbed to injury, exhaustion, illness, and hunger. Hundreds of thousands more perished in the global pandemics borne by wartime migrations.<sup>46</sup> In all, according to Wyatt MacGaffey, between 1885 and 1921 the population of the Lower Congo region was reduced by as much as 75%.<sup>47</sup>

Joining this physical devastation was the hegemonic project of the colonial state and its allies. Colonialism, as V.W. Mudimbe argues, demanded a restructuring of the terms of order to conform to the totalizing thesis that "Western history is the only space of human history and of God's fulfillment and revelation." The eradication of African agency, faith, culture, social structures, and political economy was viewed as a necessary precondition for the rebuilding of the continent, subject by subject, in the image of European "civilization." In this Manichean order the bloody exploitation of white supremacy was understood as an act of European sacrifice, a "white man's burden." Efforts by Africans to sustain ways of thinking and being that fell outside the boundaries of "civilized" expectations were viewed as further proof of Africans' lack of preparation for self-government. Efforts to confront the colonial regime were perceived as manifestations of madness. Undergirding the colonial state was the church, with its symbolic and spiritual order rooted in Europe, and its investment in the "long conversation" through which missionaries endeavored to remake codes of conduct, moral behavior, and systems of belief in the image and under the authority of a white God.<sup>48</sup>

Simon Kimbangu, observes Wyatt MacGaffey, "belonged to the first generation of BaKongo to grow up under colonial rule and to realize in his own life its peculiar frustrations."<sup>49</sup> As a young man Kimbangu joined the Baptist Mission Society (BMS), receiving four years of instruction at a village school and at the Ngombe-Lutete mission, roughly ten miles from Nkamba. But within the mission structure, Kimbangu soon found his ambitions stifled. His interest in teaching was undercut when he was unable to secure a deacon under whom to train, a failure for which Kimbangu suspected missionary interference. His desire to be an evangelist was halted by church officials concerned about his level of educational attainment and literacy. Kimbangu returned to Nkamba as a lay preacher, then journeyed to Léopoldville in search of work, joining a stream of educated and partially educated BaKongo hoping to secure positions in the bureaucratic sector or with large foreign firms. For Kimbangu, as for many others, it was not a particularly enriching

or fulfilling pursuit. He found employment with the British-owned export company, Huileries du Congo belge, using his mission training to inscribe shipping numbers on oil drums.<sup>50</sup>

Kimbangu's revival must be understood against the background of his own struggles, which must in turn be framed within the particularities of Kongo political and religious traditions that suggested prophetism as a logical and hopeful solution in 1921. During the Pentecost on the Congo in 1886, large numbers of BaKongo had converted to Protestantism during a revival that was popularly viewed as inaugurating an age of political order and spiritual harmony. The arrival of the colonial state and the expansion of the missions did not overturn older traditions in practice; rather, the state and the church were understood to constitute new forms of control within existing systems of belief. Political legitimacy continued to rest on the capacity of rulers to tame spiritual authority: to use their "magic," or righteous communion with God, to gird against the destructive threat of witchcraft.<sup>51</sup>

By 1920, as the colonial state faced a growing crisis of authority, the BMS was losing hold of its own claim to preserving order. Reforms in the century's first decade introduced into the mission a strict moral code to curtail polygamy, drinking, and dancing, which led to the suspension and excommunication of large numbers of Christian converts. Efforts to encourage in their members a firm Protestant work ethic and sense of individual responsibility by stressing congregational self-support created further disillusionment and confusion. As MacGaffey observes, "[t]he missionary idea of the Christian—individually saved, economically self-sufficient, and socially autonomous—is the Kongo ideal of complete anarchy." For mission-educated BaKongo like Kimbangu, frustrated in their ambitions within the church hierarchy and limited in their opportunities without, the failures of the BMS to maintain harmonious relations was cast in a sinister light. In breaking from the mission, Kimbanguists did not reject its logic; rather, they began to suspect that European missionaries had departed from the true path, and that to conceal their shortcomings they had hidden parts of the gospel from Africans. They also began to question why, if this was the case, the authority to receive God's word should not be vested instead in themselves.<sup>52</sup>

It was in Léopoldville in 1920, working for Huileries du Congo belge, that Kimbangu learned of Garveyism.<sup>53</sup> There he came into contact with a "black American"—surely a migrant from British West Africa, possibly Wilson—and was exposed to the flood of enthusiasm for the movement being carried by mobile workers, propagandists, and smuggled copies of the *Negro World* up and down the coast.<sup>54</sup> Kimbangu was also introduced to elders of the Ngombe Lutete mission, including André Yengo, a successful trader and bricklayer, whose shadowy organization, "Congomen," served as the primary distribution network in the colony for the *Negro World*.<sup>55</sup> The relationship between Kimbangu and Yengo was at the core of the revival. At around the same time that Kimbangu began performing miracles at Nkamba, Yengo and his associates began establishing the infrastructure for a Kimbanguist "national church" of the Lower Congo. From Léopoldville, Yengo,

the Congomen, and disillusioned members of the BMS solicited new recruits, established collections to finance the movement, and held daily meetings to spread information and build support. To facilitate contact and deliver funds and supplies to Nkamba, they established liaison points at Kasangulu and Inkisi. During his months as a fugitive, Kimbangu maintained contact with Yengo's cadre, visiting Léopoldville at least twice.<sup>56</sup>

If Kimbangu drew inspiration and support from these connections, his prophetic movement was deeply rooted in Kongo cosmology. For centuries prophetic power had been invoked by BaKongo prophets in moments of social breakdown, dispute, and disorder. In these revivals, spiritual forces identified and spoke through the prophet. As had been the case in the past, during Kimbangu's revival this spiritual authority became vested in both men and women prophets.<sup>57</sup> As Yolanda Covington-Ward has argued, Kimbanguists merged elements of mission-inspired Protestant Christianity with "everyday cultural performances" rooted in the "traditional embodied movements" of spirit-induced trembling. In doing so they pierced the "logical framework" of colonial and mission authority by reasserting the alternative authority of Kongo cultural performance, and by invoking the higher power of the Holy Spirit in the service of this performance. According to one account, Kimbanguists foretold the coming of twelve "real" prophets, the very greatest of them appearing in Mbanza Kongo (San Salvador), the heart of the former Kongo Kingdom. In so doing, Kimbanguists imbued their promise of a coming Golden Age with the sacred and sentimental authority of a Golden Age passed.<sup>58</sup>

What had begun to emerge, then, before Kimbangu escaped Nkama on July 6, and before Yengo and several of his associates were arrested on July 17, was a promising, if nascent, vehicle through which to reject European mission control and to establish an independent space for alternative African religious expression. The project was challenging to colonial order without being directly antagonistic. Kimbangu urged his followers to pay their taxes; Yengo told colonial agents that he sought a church modeled on the Senegalese example, where French authorities allowed powerful Marabouts to operate with a large measure of autonomy within the framework of European administration.<sup>59</sup> But at the core of Kimbangu's challenge to BMS authority was his accusation that European missionaries had compromised their legitimacy by concealing the full truth from Africans. If they had brought God to Africa, only Kimbangu could bring Him "to the African."<sup>60</sup> Far from rejecting BMS doctrine, Kimbanguism articulated the religious justification for a reassertion of BMS principles in the context of black leadership. Where European missionaries had failed to receive the word of God, Africans would succeed. Where the missionaries instructed Africans to worship a foreign deity and to conform to foreign standards of order and propriety, Kimbangu instructed them to worship a God who represented black people as well, and who sanctified African cosmogony—a God who revealed Himself to black people by working through Kimbangu's prophetic movement.<sup>61</sup> By reconstituting spiritual authority in this manner, Kimbangu was stripping Europeans of all moral authority.<sup>62</sup>

***Des sentiments xenophobes: World War I and the Rising Tide of Color***

If Kimbangu's revival sprouted from homegrown roots, it was also a product of the destruction, disruptions, and discourses engendered by the Great War. Across Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, men and women mobilized to defend the spoils of decades of empire-building—"to decide," sneered V.I. Lenin, "whether the British or German group of financial marauders is to receive the most booty."<sup>63</sup> Throughout Africa, the devastating conditions and novel opportunities presented by the war engendered episodes of anti-colonial resistance. Rebellion erupted in Nyasaland (Malawi), Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), in the Transkei region of South Africa, in northern and southern Nigeria, and in the western Volta region of French West Africa (Burkina Faso).<sup>64</sup> In the Belgian Congo's Equatorial Province, the healer and prophetess Maria N'koi organized a short-lived revival in which she encouraged crowds to turn away from the colonial state, and prophesied the defeat of the Belgians by an invading German army.<sup>65</sup> These insurrections were joined after the war by a "strike influenza" that mobilized workers across the globe, and by a series of protests, rebellions, and revolutions in Russia, Germany, India, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, China, Indonesia, Turkey, and Egypt.<sup>66</sup>

With Western Europe in physical and financial ruin following the Armistice of 1918, roiled by anti-colonial insurgencies, imperial policymakers turned with renewed interest to tropical Africa. Noting somberly that "the era of European autocracy in Asia is past," Britain's chief imperial theorist, Frederick Lugard, observed that Africa was to be "the land of economic development for the white races in the twentieth century."<sup>67</sup> But in the era of mandates and responsible stewardship ushered in by the Covenant of the League of Nations, the excesses of the past must be replaced with sober and intelligent colonial leadership. E.D. Morel, who earlier in the century had led the transnational movement to end King Leopold's murderous reign in the Congo, argued that the "just, equitable, understanding government of the primitive, but highly intelligent, adaptable, kindly and politically helpless races of tropical Africa, is one of the finest and most unselfish tasks which remain for white men to fulfill in the world."<sup>68</sup> This did not mean, for Morel or other "liberal imperialists," that European manufacturers and working men should not benefit from the harvesting and production of African raw materials.<sup>69</sup> What it meant was that Africans must be carefully ushered in to the modern world, compelled to work part of the time for European firms but protected at other times by the embrace of their "traditional" rulers, institutions, laws, and social mores.<sup>70</sup> In the British, French, and Belgian colonies, variations of indirect rule sought to maintain this balance by intruding on African "custom" only so much as was needed to fulfill the economic prerogatives of colonial statecraft. Lugard's "dual mandate" for interwar Africa acknowledged that Europeans were not "developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy," but maintained that the mandate to profit from the colonial enterprise offered a felicitous path toward the accomplishment of the colonists' stated purpose: aiding "the native races in their progress to a higher plane."<sup>71</sup>

Crucial to this rhetoric of postwar governance was the core principle that African subjects were best to avoid—at their present stage of development—the rigors of modern politics. Following this logic, anti-imperialist challenges to white hegemony—particularly by peoples of African descent, who were deemed furthest from achieving an organic condition of sovereignty—were viewed not merely as a threat to Europe’s future, but a threat to the civilization itself. After the war, citing the work of some of the world’s most eminent scientists, popular writers in Europe and the United States devised sweeping new theories of history, sociology, and politics through the lens of the “new biological revelation,” what bestselling American author Lothrop Stoddard described as “the mightiest transformation of ideas that the world has ever seen.”<sup>72</sup> Arguing that the scientific breakthroughs of Darwinism and eugenics had exposed the natural rights tradition as a “pernicious delusion,” Stoddard declared World War I the “White Civil War,” and warned of the “rising tide of color” that would, if left unchecked, wash away the civilization of the superior race. Stoddard’s work was approvingly cited by U.S. president Warren G. Harding, who declared “the race problem” a global concern that could be addressed only by maintaining “natural segregations” and abandoning ideas of “social equality.” The central lesson of Stoddard’s work, wrote Lugard in a glowing review, was “the vital necessity of preserving the purity of race-types.” “Here . . . is the true conception of the inter-relation of colour,” wrote Lugard, updating the compromise suggested by Booker T. Washington in his famous address at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta. “[I]n matters social and racial a separate path, each pursuing his own inherited traditions, preserving his own race-purity and race-pride; equality in things spiritual; agreed divergence in the physical and material.”<sup>73</sup>

The need to protect the stiffening, “crustaceous borders” of the global color line in the 1920s was given added imperative by widespread fears that the Great War had elicited the emergence of new types of political solidarities.<sup>74</sup> In an insightful report written during the First World War, a British intelligence officer noted with foreboding the “unprecedented mixing of representatives of almost all the black races” during the East African Campaign and suggested that over the camp fires the “doctrine of ‘Africa for the African’ [had] taken form as an ideal in the minds of many.”<sup>75</sup> After the war there was much hand-wringing by commentators worried that the conflict had taught Africans a series of bad lessons: that the previously “hypnotic” moral authority of Western civilization was not infallible; that Europe was enfeebled militarily and materially; that colonial subjects should not be content with their wages or their political subordination; that they shared a common condition and could share a common voice. Everywhere was evidence of a creeping race consciousness, spurred by wartime congress, exacerbated by postwar dislocations and deprivations, facilitated by improvements in postal and transportation technologies, and inflamed by the “flood” of propaganda entering the continent from nationalist sources in India and Egypt, and from the “extreme section of American Negroes.”<sup>76</sup> By the end of 1922, the *Negro World* had been officially



banned throughout much of Africa, or was otherwise “strictly controlled.”<sup>77</sup> Rumors of Garveyist-engineered uprisings, alliances with Bolsheviks and Pan-Islamists, and sundry conspiracies enlivened colonial fears. In 1923, as Hermann Norden made his five-month trek across the Congo, he was astonished to find at post after post Belgian officials eager for information about “Marcus Garvey, his Black Star [L]ine, and other details of that mad dreamer’s plan to win the continent back for its scattered people.”<sup>78</sup>

Marcus Garvey, for his part, devoted the bulk of his formidable propaganda work to popularizing and sustaining precisely this narrative of creeping racial consciousness and pan-colored alliance.<sup>79</sup> Copies of the *Negro World*, born up and down the west African coast, situated the work of the UNIA at the heart of a global, inexorable march of forces that would end in the return of Asia to the Asians, Latin America to the Latin Americans, and Africa to the Africans. The *Negro World* carried news of mounting opposition to United States stewardship in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Nicaragua, and especially the Philippines. Even more attention was given to clashes of colonial subjects with British authorities across the Middle East, Africa, and India. Japan’s rise on the world stage, Chinese nationalist struggles, and Abd el-Krim’s revolt against the Spanish and the French in Morocco were afforded sustained and detailed attention. To ensure the message was not missed, the paper reprinted essays by statesmen like David Lloyd George and the former Kaiser Wilhelm, warning of the sinister confluence of these episodes throughout the colonial world. Garvey provided his own guided analysis in his popular front-page editorials, as did UNIA intellectual leaders in reprinted speeches, editorials, and recurring columns. Stories of anti-colonial activity, reprinted from wire services, were rechristened with titles that brought the editorial vision of the paper to the fore: “Bitter Race War to the Death is Forecast”; “White Race in Peril”; “The Tide of Color Goes on Rising.”<sup>80</sup> These sentiments became part of the common language through which Garveyites in North America, the Caribbean basin, and sub-Saharan Africa came to understand the purpose and the thrust of the movement.

There was a rich political and intellectual context, in other words, for Belgian officials to view evidence of Garveyism’s arrival in the Congo as confirmation of a coalescing, anti-white, pan-African sentiment; or, in the Orwellian framing given it by colonial agents, *des sentiments xenophobes*. And it is unsurprising, given its proximate position at the center of Garveyite channels of communication, that Kimbangu’s revival was understood by colonial officials through the prism of these anxieties. On May 11, the territorial administrator, Léon-Georges Morel, visited Nkamba with a company of soldiers to observe Kimbangu’s activities. According to Morel, Kimbangu gathered his followers in front of the administrator’s tent and recited the biblical narrative of David’s defeat of Goliath, while a large engraving of the fallen giant was displayed. Followers exclaimed that they expected fire to fall from heaven upon the whites, as it had done upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. “It is necessary to confront Kimbangu because the tendency of his



movement is pan-Negro,” wrote Morel from the field. “Kimbangu possesses an almost unlimited moral authority over the crowd, and it is certain that he could create a spirit of hostility among the natives toward the white race.”<sup>81</sup>

Morel returned to Nkamba on June 6 with twenty soldiers to arrest the prophet. Kimbangu, in his own telling, instructed his followers to resist not evil, and offered himself for capture.<sup>82</sup> But the encounter quickly spiraled out of control. In the resulting confrontation, two soldiers were wounded, one several times with a knife; a woman was shot in the side, and her ten-year-old nephew was killed. As the soldiers razed the village, the sentry guarding Kimbangu abandoned his post to “share in the loot,” allowing Kimbangu to escape. In the minds of his followers, Kimbangu had performed another miracle. “The Government sent troops to arrest him, but the power of the Lord overcame them,” explained the minor prophet Mabwaaka Mpaka Gabriel. “A little stream south of Kemba flooded till it resembled the Congo itself, and Pharoah’s chariots were unable to cross.”<sup>83</sup>

During Kimbangu’s three months in hiding, the situation quickly devolved. The colonial state went into lockdown, sweeping up Kimbanguists and allowing soldiers to roam the countryside, where they seized money and goods, defiling places of worship, and committing “outrage[s]” against women. The “growing spirit of insolence and insubordination” observed among Kimbanguists by worried Europeans, the disquieting evidence of “a new race consciousness,” emerged in full bloom.<sup>84</sup> The Léopoldville-based newspaper, *L’Avenir Colonial Belge*, reported that whites in the capital were subject to “outrageous taunts” during the day and robberies demonstrating a “disconcerting boldness” at night. Kimbanguist renditions of translated versions of Baptist hymnals like “Soldiers of Christ, Arise!” were perceived to carry a new, sinister subtext. Original compositions, like the one recorded by the Belgian author Jeane Maquet-Tombu, announcing the rise of the apostles of liberation and the end of colonial rule, seemed to confirm these fears.<sup>85</sup> These perceptions were filtered through the prism of fear-stoked concerns about a global rising tide of color. As American missionary Catherine Mabie put it in her annual report for 1921, the prophet movement was “closely akin to the world wide developing sense of race solidarity among negroes.”<sup>86</sup>

The risk was believed to be especially acute along the rail line, the colony’s only effective means of transportation between the Atlantic coast and the interior, where rumors circulated that laborers were planning a work stoppage. Investigators noted considerable and accelerating support for Kimbangu along the line, and reported that bands of catechists were proselytizing and preaching “sedition.” One investigator witnessed workers throwing their *livrets* (identity cards) at the feet of their foreman, declaring, “we do not want to work any more, we have had enough of working for the white man.”<sup>87</sup> An American missionary, Thomas Moody, observed that the workers were “thrilled at a chance to join the movement initiated by Marcus Garvey.”<sup>88</sup>

During the crisis, many Kongo indeed came to view news of a powerful African spiritual authority as proof of the imminent end of European rule. Minor prophets—some deputized by Kimbangu, others who attached themselves

to the movement by their own initiative—counseled their followers to abstain from work, to refuse to pay taxes, to refuse to shake the hands of white people. Toward the end of June, the minor prophet Ngunza Timote told his followers that by placing their trust in God “the posts of the state will be burned,” the whites would return home, and the Kongo would become their own leaders. This counsel gave concrete shape to Kimbangu’s prophetic suggestion that “the whites will become the blacks and the blacks will become the whites.”<sup>89</sup> It also mirrored the Kimbanguist chant:

Our leaders, our young men, our young women, our children are lost, our country is lost, for the whites possess it. But we teach that our land will be reborn. The whites will be driven out. We will go into the forest, we will gather all the firewood, and we will place all the white people in it so they can burn, and we will be masters in our country.”<sup>90</sup>

Apocalyptic beliefs that the end was near, that the Lord’s arrival was imminent, that rifles would rain from the sky and the railroad would be torn up as Europeans fled into the sea were joined by concrete expectations of African rule. Declaring, “[w]e have found the God of the Blacks,” Kimbanguists began preparing for a new era of spiritual and political authority.<sup>91</sup>

As elsewhere on the continent, the notion that the colonial period was near an end was intertwined with rumors that the ousting of the Belgians would be facilitated by the arrival of black Americans.<sup>92</sup> In the Congo the rumor was given local context, expressed in the popular belief that a ship would “be seen coming up the Congo at Manyanga,” at which point “the white people would leave the colony.”<sup>93</sup> The rumors were also given legitimacy by a pervasive Kongo legend about the Atlantic Slave Trade. Rather than killing their captured slaves, it was said, Europeans decided to leave them on an island (America) to starve, only to be thwarted by God, who provided the former slaves with civilization, skyscrapers, and plentiful food. In performing this action Europeans had endowed black Americans with the means to mount a challenge to their authority in Africa. The expectation, particularly during moments of unrest, was that these “ex-Africans” would return, armed with their impressive technology, to liberate their kin. Because America, like Europe, was also viewed as the land of the dead, ideas about returning black Americans were often synonymous with the return of the ancestors, the joining of the worlds of the living and the dead, and by extension the inauguration of a Golden Age that incorporated elements of the Christian millennium with Kongo understandings about renewal and political-religious harmony.<sup>94</sup>

Rumors about the arrival of black American liberators thus reveal the extent to which Africans in the Lower Congo were positioned as both local and diasporic agents amid the anti-colonial ferment of the post–World War period. If the rumors were rendered in the context of local cosmological beliefs and expectations, they were articulated in a manner that expressed a consciousness of—and interaction with—global events. One messianic prediction dated to the year of Kimbangu’s revival imagined the arrival of the “King of the Americans,” endowed to set up

factories and schools in the Congo. This black American liberator—bearing ships and technology and wisdom—projected a compelling mirror of the Garveyist rhetoric traveling up and down the west African coast. It suggested that like whites in the colony, Kimbanguists proceeded with repertoire of information, belief, and expectation that flowed from multiple spatial scopes.<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusion

On September 12, Simon Kimbangu returned to Nkama, instructed his followers to construct a great fire, and told them to prepare for his arrest. He surrendered voluntarily on September 14.<sup>96</sup> At his trial, Kimbangu was found guilty of posing as the savior of the black race, of declaring whites the enemy, of convincing his followers to believe in a new God who was more powerful than the state, and of attempting to construct an African National Church.<sup>97</sup> In the years after Kimbangu's arrest his followers sustained his church by stepping back from open confrontation with the state, more carefully guarding its secrets, and nurturing Kimbanguism's separatist impulse, which included the belief that a higher power would deliver them from bondage. In 1925, John P. MacGregor, the British Consul at Boma, reported that "the natives who have thrown off their connection with the missions are convinced that Kibangu [sic] and his disciples will return amongst them, that the fire of heaven will consume all those who have not adhered to their beliefs, and that the Europeans will disappear from the country of which Kibangu and his followers will remain the sole masters." According to MacGregor, Kimbanguists "declare . . . their fidelity to the state authorities, carry out all their fiscal and administrative obligations, [and] give every evidence of exemplary submissiveness to the government." But they had rejected the authority of the missions. And they expected divine deliverance. Intellectually, they had "emancipated themselves." MacGregor compared Kimbanguists to the Jews during the Roman period, awaiting the coming of the Messiah.<sup>98</sup>

The idea of returning black Americans remained an important rhetorical and metaphysical vehicle for expressing a new age of African independence within Kimbangu's church. As Kimbanguists traveled through the region spreading their gospel, and as Congolese women and men chanted "seditious" songs in open defiance of white rule, the specter of Marcus Garvey, the great symbol of black rule, carved an indelible mark on the fragile psychology of the colonial state. For years to come both whites and blacks would wonder when Americans might arrive in their midst. In the remote village of Tshaba, in the central Congo, the traveler Hermann Norden came across a capitao lashing Africans, who explained, "[t]hey are getting notions of race equality and Africa for the Africans."<sup>99</sup>

Rumors of black American liberators, when they emerged in 1921, were given legitimacy by the foundational expectations of Kongo cosmology, which cast "America" as an analogic land of the dead, of the ancestors, and by extension a source of messianic prophecy. But the particular outlines of this narrative of black

American liberators also bore the unmistakable imprint of global Garveyism. Like the transmission of rumor, the spread of diasporic consciousness traffics in broad and malleable communal “truths” that rely for their valence on local understandings, articulations, and politics making. As word of a great congress of Negroes in America spread up and down the coast of West Africa, throughout the massive southern-central African migration network, and into east African ports, Garveyism generated great excitement, interpretation, and expectation. What was conveyed was often more rumor than substance, the projection of UNIA aspirations more than concrete plans or accomplished fact. Black Americans had acquired advanced technological tools, it was said. They had acquired a great fleet of iron ships, or were building a great army. An anti-colonial tide of color was rising. These stories were legible because notions of whiteness and blackness had become inscribed in the cultural logic and political institutions of colonial rule, as well as in deep-rooted traditions of pan-African identity building and exchange. They had purchase as a method of articulating dissent because the rhetoric of race consciousness was threatening to colonial agents in the best of circumstances, let alone in the aftermath of World War I, when it was widely feared that precisely the types of provocations expressed by Garveyism would come to pass without the exercise of extreme vigilance. When Simon Kimbangu organized his revival at the center of the Congo’s Garveyist information network and among its most committed readers of the *Negro World*, and when he organized a movement that was grounded in independent Christianity, politically non-confrontational, and practically motivated toward the creation of a space for black consciousness-raising and organization, he was articulating the outlines of an African Garveyism that emerged throughout southern Africa, in Nyasaland and the Rhodesias, and in Kenya. He was moving in a space created by the dynamic convergence of local forces with broad currents of rumor and pan-African identity, and legible to colonial agents, white writers, missionaries, and African subjects. He was drawing on Garveyism to garner authority for a prophetic message that also drew its authority from a long tradition of Kongo prophetism, and that sought to reorganize the terms of spiritual leadership in ways that reformulated the old (pre-colonial) order in the pursuit of a new (post-colonial) era.

The uses to which Kimbanguists and other Africans put Garveyism helped generate a fundamental shift in Marcus Garvey’s own thinking about his movement and its contributions to the anti-imperial struggle.<sup>100</sup> Once declaring his intention to establish a grand Negro Empire in Africa under his leadership, Garvey now argued that the object of the UNIA was not to “transport men to carry out the conquest of Africa” but to “broadcast throughout the entire continent” the activities of the UNIA.”<sup>101</sup> And whereas Garvey once envisioned an emigrationist movement led by African American and Afro-West Indians to develop and civilize fallen Africa, Garveyites now spread the message, as Garveyite organizer Ernest Wallace put it during a meeting in the Eastern Cape, that UNIA agents were not deputized “to tell what the [N]egroes in America do . . . but to ask them to work

out their own salvation.” Africa must take the ingredients offered by Garveyism and “cook her own pot.”<sup>102</sup> In November 1924, months from his imprisonment in Atlanta’s federal penitentiary, the financial and bureaucratic edifice of his organization crumbling around him, Garvey announced the inauguration of a “second period” in the UNIA’s development, to be devoted less to sustaining the UNIA as a “great institution” than to the pragmatic work of “quiet and peaceful penetration.”<sup>103</sup> Critics of Garvey, both at the time and since, have, for understandable reasons, focused on the implosion of the bureaucratic UNIA in the mid-to-late 1920s. But, paradoxically, Garveyism’s global legacy would emerge, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the UNIA’s imperial dream. The decline of Garvey’s institutional empire provided space for the emergence of a “second period” of modest organization building and consciousness raising that remained a vital wellspring for African activists, proselytizers, and intellectuals throughout the interwar era. Garvey’s success at building a workable mass politics out of the ferment of the Great War is well known. But his true contribution to global politics came later, during the frustrating decades of the 1920s and 1930s, and through the agency of men and women who adopted the infrastructure of Garveyism to pursue their own ends, and not always in ways that Garvey himself would have approved. “If we have accomplished nothing else but the bringing to the natives of Africa a consciousness of themselves and a desire on their part to free themselves from thrall-dom of alien races and nations, we would have justified the existence of this great organization,” Garvey declared at Liberty Hall in 1923. Africa’s redemption “will not mean so much fighting from without as the rising of the people from within with a new consciousness of their power which is gradually being realized.”<sup>104</sup>

## Notes

1. National Archives of England, London (PRO), CO 536/138/10282, G. Thomas to A.J. Wallach, 27 July 1921; W.B. Frame to C.E. Wilson, 25 June 1921, in Cecilia Irvine, “The Birth of the Kimbanguist Movement in the Bas-Zaire 1921,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 6, no. 1 (1974): 67–70; Jean-Luc Vellut (Ed.), “Account of Nyuvudi Paul,” in *Simon Kimbangu 1921: de Prédication à la Deportation: Les Sources* (Brussels: Academie Royale des Sciences D’Outre-Mer, 2005), 67–85.
2. Peter Hugh James Lerrigo, “The ‘Prophet Movement’ in Congo,” *The International Review of Missions* 11, no. 42 (1922): 275–76; PRO, CO 536/138/10282, J.P. MacGregor to British Ambassador to Belgium, 21 Nov. 1924; PRO, CO 536/138/10282, R.L. Jennings to A.W. Hilliard, 19 May 1921; Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, vol. 2 (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1965), 602–03; Marvin D. Markovitz, *Cross and Sword: The Political Role of Christian Missions in the Belgian Congo, 1908–1960* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1973), 137; Efraim Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958), 57–59, 65; Anders Kraft, “La Force de L’Esprit,” in *Simon Kimbangu 1921: de Predication a la Deportation: Les Sources*, edited by Jean-Luc Vellut (Brussels: Academie Royale des Sciences D’Outre-Mer, 2005), 40–2; Rapports 165 et 171 du 19 et 20.6.21 de A.T. Luozi à C.D.D. Boma, in Paul Raymaekers and Henri Desroche (eds.), *L’Administration et le Sacré: Discours Religieux et Parcours*

- Politiques en Afrique Centrale (1921–1957)* (Brussels: Académie Royale des Sciences D'Outre Mer, 1983), 68–69; Irvine, "Birth," 43–44.
3. Article in *L'Avenir Colonial Belge*, 17 July 1921, in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (MGP), vol. 11, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983–2011), 9:98.
  4. Rapport no. 322 du 17.5.21 de A.T. Thysville à CDD, in Raymaekers and Desroche, *L'Administration*, 51–55; Belgian Foreign Ministry Archives (BFMA), AI (A15) 1405 bis 11/Q/3, "Report on Kimbangu, 23 June 1921" and "Lettre de M. le Gouverneur-Général" (translation mine); PRO, CO 536/138/10282, L. Morel to Jennings, 6 June 1921; Jennings to Mr. Wilson, 18 June 1921; Thomas to Wallach, 27 July 1921; Jennings to Morel, 25 July 1921; Irvine, "Birth," 47; Peter Hugh James Lerrigo, "Africa—A Land of Green and Golden Glory," *Missions* 14, no. 3 (1923), 133; Peter Hugh James Lerrigo, *Rock-breaker: Kingdom Building in Kongo Land* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1922), 92.
  5. BFMA, AI (A15) 1405 bis II/Q/3, Lettre de M. le Gouverneur-Général, 23 June 1921; Irvine, "Birth," 43; W. Reynolds, interview with Efraim Andersson, quoted in Andersson, *Messianic*, 254; Rev. T. Moody, quoted in *Negro World* (NW), October 27, 1923, 2; BFMA, AI (A15) 1405 bis II/Q/3, J.C. Van Cleemput, "Mouvement prophétique au Bas-Congo," 14 September 1921.
  6. Adam Ewing, "Garvey or Garveyism? Colin Grant's *Negro with a Hat* (2008) and the search for a new synthesis in UNIA scholarship," *Transition* 105 (2011): 130–45.
  7. This view is revived by Colin Grant, who virtually ignores the work of Garveyites outside of Liberia, and who characterizes Africa as little more than a "Utopian ideal" and an "escape route" for Garvey and his followers. See Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 387.
  8. James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787–2005* (New York: Penguin, 2006).
  9. See Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012); Michael O. West, "The Seeds are Sown: The Impact of Garveyism in Zimbabwe in the Interwar Years," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2/3 (2002): 335–62. The scope of Garveyist organizing in Africa is brought into sharp focus by the magnificent two-volume "Africa Series" of the Marcus Garvey Papers. See Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. IX and X (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For important and pioneering work on Garveyism in Africa, see Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, CT: Majority Press, 1976), 110–50; Robert Edgar, "Garveyism in Africa: Dr. Wellington and the American Movement in the Transkei," *Ufahamu* 6, no. 3 (1976): 31–67; Arnold Hughes, "Africa and the Garvey Movement in the Interwar Years," in *Garvey: Africa, Europe, and the Americas*, edited by Rupert Lewis and Maureen Warner-Lewis (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1986), 111–35; Robert A. Hill and Gregory Piro, "Africa for the Africans: the Garvey Movement in South Africa, 1920–1940," in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, edited by Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London: Longman, 1987), 209–53; Gregory Piro, "The Role of Garveyism in the Making of Namibian Nationalism," in *Namibia 1884–1984: Readings on Namibia's History and Society*, edited by Brian Wood (London: Namibia Support Committee, 1988), 259–67; Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey, Anti-Colonial Champion* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988), 153–77.
  10. Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, especially 186–237.

11. In her work on vampire stories in central and east Africa, Luise White identifies—and argues for the importance of—“genres” with recognizable outlines, adaptable to local particularities and needs. See Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 6.
12. Helen Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924–1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 214. For the relationship between the UNIA and the ICU, see Bradford, *Taste of Freedom*, 126–27, 214–16; William Beinart and Colin Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape, 1890–1930* (London: James Currey, 1987), 283; Robert Trent Vinson, “‘Sea Kaffirs’: ‘American Negroes’ and the Gospel of Garveyism in Early Twentieth-Century Cape Town,” *Journal of African History* 47, no. 2 (2006), 297–99. For links between the UNIA and ANC, see Vinson, *Americans are Coming*, 95–101; Hill and Pirio, “Africa for the Africans,” 231–36. For the Wellington movement, see Edgar, “Garveyism in Africa”; Vinson, *Americans are Coming*, 103–18. For the Israelites, see Robert Edgar, “The Prophet Motive: Enoch Mgijima, the Israelites, and the Background to the Bulhoek Massacre,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15, no. 3 (1983): esp. 419–21; Robert Edgar, *Because They Chose the Plan of God: The Story of the Bulhoek Massacre* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988). For the prophetess Nontetha, see Robert R. Edgar and Hilary Sapire, *African Apocalypse: The Story of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a Twentieth-Century South African Prophet* (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2000), 1–31; Clifton C. Crais, “Representation and the Politics of Identity in South Africa: An Eastern Cape Example,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25, no. 1 (1992): 113–18.
13. Vinson, *Americans are Coming*, 103. For a detailed account of Garveyism in South West Africa, see Pirio, “Role of Garveyism,” 259–67. See also Zedekiah Ngavirue, “On Wearing the Victor’s Uniforms and Replacing their Churches: Southwest Africa (Namibia) 1920–1950,” in *Cargo Cults and Millenarian Movements: Transoceanic Comparisons of New Religious Movements*, edited by G. W. Trompf (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990), 396–99; Heinrich Vedder, “The Herero,” in *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (Cape Town: Cape Times Limited, 1928), 163. The Marcus Garvey Papers extensively document Garveyite organizing work in the protectorate and the resulting rumors among the Herero. For examples of the former see MGP, 9:204, 9:279, 9:425, and 9:673–74. For examples of the latter, see MGP, 9:614–16, 9:666, 9:671, 1); 8–9, 10:720–26, and 10:732.
14. For the spread of rumors about black American liberators in Zambia, see Ewing, *Age of Garvey*, 176–85.
15. For examples of the first camp, see Damaso Feci, “Vie cache et vie publique de Simon Kimbangu selon la littérature coloniale et missionnaire belge,” *Les Cahiers du CEDAF* 9–10 (1972): 1–83; Kimpanga Mahaniah, “The Presence of Black Americans in the Lower Congo from 1878 to 1921,” in *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, edited by Joseph E. Harris 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1993), 405–20; Susan Asch, *L’Eglise du Prophète Kimbangu: De ses origines à son rôle actuel au Zaïre* (Paris: Karthala, 1983); Aurélien Mokoko Gampiot, *Kimbanguisme et Identité Noir* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004); Andersson, *Messianic*. For examples of the second, see Wyatt MacGaffey, *Modern Kongo Prophets: Religion in a Plural Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); Joel E. Tishken, “Prophecy and Power in Afro-Christian Churches: A Comparative Analysis of the Nazareth Baptist Church and the Église Kimbanguiste” (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2002).
16. Joseph Fronczak, “Local People’s Global Politics: A Transnational History of the Hands Off Ethiopia Movement of 1935,” *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 2 (2015), 270 (italics removed from original).



17. The notion of diasporic practice is drawn from Kesha Fikes, "Diasporic Governmentality: On the Gendered Limits of Migrant Wage-Labour in Portugal," *Feminist Review* 90 (2008), 50. See also Tina Campt, "The Crowded Space of Diaspora: Intercultural Address and the Tensions of Diasporic Relation," *Radical History Review* 83 (Spring 2002): 94–113; Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
18. Brown, *Dropping Anchor*, 6.
19. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.
20. Pan-Africanism was less an ideology than a historically conditioned social, cultural, and political field of meaning. Prescribing neither radicalism nor conservatism, neither boldness nor caution, neither separatism nor interracial cooperation, the pan-African tradition offered a building block of group identify formation. As historians Michael O. West and William Martin argue, the intellectual traditions of black internationalism generated a "potter's clay" that might be molded and utilized in creative and unexpected ways. See Michael O. West and William G. Martin, "Contours of the Black International: From Toussaint to Tupac," in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*, edited by Michael O. West, William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 11.
21. Anthony Bogues, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 9–10, 16–20.
22. Yolanda Covington-Ward, *Gesture and Power: Religion, Nationalism, and Everyday Performance in Congo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), especially chapter 2; Aurélien Mokoko Gampiot, "Reading Black Identity: Kimbanguism and the Bible," in *Refractions of the Scriptural: Critical Orientations as Transgression*, edited by Vincent L. Wimbush (New York: Routledge, 2016), 139–48.
23. Luise White, "Telling More: Lies, Secrets, and History," *History and Theory* 39, no. 4 (2000): 11–22.
24. Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman helpfully define rumor as "a specific proposition for belief, passed along from person to person, usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being present." See Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman, *The Psychology of Rumor* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), ix. The literature on rumor is deep, interdisciplinary, and geographically rich. For classic works see Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France*, trans. Joan White (1932; New York: Vintage, 1973); Tamotsu Shibutani, *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1966); Terry Ann Knopf, *Rumors, Race and Riots* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1975); Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983); Anand A. Yang, "A conversation of rumors: The language of popular 'Mentalités' in late nineteenth-century Colonial India," *Journal of Social History* 20, no. 3 (1987): 485–505; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Patricia A. Turner, *I Heard It Through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For useful recent work, see Steven Hahn, "'Extravagant Expectations' of Freedom: Rumor, Political Struggle, and the Christmas Insurrection Scare of 1865 in the American South," *Past & Present* 157, no. 1 (1997): 122–58; Veena Das, "Specificities: Official Narratives, Rumor, and the Social Production of Hate," *Social Identities* 4, no. 1 (1998): 109–30; Luise White, "Telling More," 11–22; Lauren Derby, "Beyond Fugitive Speech: Rumor and Affect in Caribbean History," *Small Axe* 44, no. 2 (2014): 123–40.
25. Guhu, *Elementary Aspects*, 261. Barthes's quote is lifted from Guha's text.

26. Derby, "Beyond Fugitive Speech," 131. Similarly, Luise White argues that studying the spread and reception of lies "allows us to read testimony as a social rather than an individual construction. Individuals speak from social worlds. This makes what they say fantastic evidence ... but it is evidence that arises out of more than their personal experience." White, "Telling More," 16–17. Drawing on Robert A. Hill's notion of "dread history," Anthony Bogues calls for scholars to "shift our archives" to "grapple with the lived experiences of the Afro-Caribbean masses" by focusing attention not on "standard forms of historical production" but rather on what Kamau Brathwaite calls the "inner plantation": "cores and kernels; resistant local forms; roots, stumps, survival rhythms growing points." See Robert A. Hill, *Dread History: Leonard P. Howell and Millenarian Visions in Early Rastafari Religion in Jamaica* (Chicago: Research Associates School Times Publications/Frontline Distribution Int'l, Inc., 2001); Bogues, *Black Heretics*, 176–80; Kamau Braithwaite, "Caribbean Man in Space and Time," *Savou* 11/12 (1973): 1–11.
27. Terence Ranger, "Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Studies Review* 29, no. 2 (1986): 17.
28. The most famous expression of this genre is Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1920).
29. H.F. Worley and C.G. Contee, "The Worley Report on the Pan-African Congress of 1919," *The Journal of Negro History* 55, no. 2 (1970): 141; "Letter from 'Dorn,' Sierra Leone," *NW*, 26 March 1921, 4; Ah Venn, "An African Letter," *NW*, 21 Feb 1931, 4; R.L. Okonkwo, "The Garvey Movement in British West Africa," *Journal of African History* 21, no. 1 (1980): 107.
30. School of Oriental and African Studies Archives, London, International Missionary Council/Committee of British Missionary Societies Papers (SOAS-IMC/CBMS), Calabar Missionary Correspondence, 1911–1923, Rev. J.K. Macgregor, Principal, Hope Waddell Training Institute, to J.H. Oldham, Calabar, 10 February 1923.
31. Buell, *Native*, 2:304; Marcel Olivier to Albert Sarraut, 1 August 1922, MGP, 9:550; Administrator of Douala District to Commissioner of France, 9 December 1923, MGP, 10:149; Schomburg Center, New York Public Library (SC-NYPL), J.R. Ralph Casimir Papers, Sc MG 110, Box 1, Folder 8, J.E. Casely Hayford to J.R. Ralph Casimir, 10 January 1925; SC-NYPL, John Edward Bruce Papers, Reel 1, Group A, Folder 7, H, 1-15, Hayford to John E. Bruce, 24 November 1923; "Intercepted Letter from John Henry Farmer to Randall," 15 June 1922, MGP, 9:456; J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900–1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 96.
32. SC-NYPL, John Edward Bruce Papers, Reel 1, Group A, Folder 7, H, 1-15, Fred W. Toote to John E. Bruce, 12 January 1922; "Speech by John Farmer and Toasts at Farewell Banquet for John Kamara," MGP, 9:467–68; PRO, FO 115/2766, R.C.F. Maugham to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 17 August 1922; "Report on John Smith," Dakar, 25 June 1924, MGP, 10:199.
33. SOAS-IMC/CBMS, Calabar Missionary Correspondence, 1911–1923, J.K. Macgregor to J.H. Oldham, 10 February 1923; "Letter from A.B. Bentinck Beckley, Minna, Northern Nigeria," *NW*, 9 April 1923, 2; "Letter from Joshua Wilson, Zaria, Nigeria," *NW*, 4 Feb. 1922, 3; PRO, CO 583/109, W.F. Gowers to Hon. Secretary to the Government, Lagos, 28 March 1922; Hughes, "Africa," 117; Joyce Cary, *The Case for African Freedom* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1941), 16–17.
34. Surviving UNIA records indicate that between 1925–1927 West African divisions existed in Accra and Mampong (in the Ashanti region), Gold Coast; in Monrovia and Brewerville, Liberia, and in Freetown, Sierra Leone, which maintained two divisions. See "Divisions of the UNIA, 1925–1927," Records of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Central Division, New York, 1918–1959, Box 2, a16 [microform]. Branches also existed in Lagos and Kano, Nigeria, and in Dakar and Rufisque, Senegal. For a report on the Lagos division,

- see PRO, CO 583/109, letter from G.H. Walker to Secretary, Southern Province, 29 March 1922. For Senegal, see Pierre Jean Henri Didelot to Governor-General of French West Africa, MGP, 9:501–11. See also “Article from *African Messenger* (Nigeria),” reprinted in NW, 30 Sept. 1922, 10; “Article from The Provincial Herald (Aba, Nigeria),” reprinted in NW, 7 Oct. 1922.
35. See, for example “Editorial in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*,” 14 January 1922; “Editorial in the *Gold Coast Leader*,” 1 December 1923; “Article in *Gold Coast Leader*, 19 September 1925; “Frank H. Dawson to *Times of Nigeria*,” 28 June 1920; “Article in the *West Africa Mail and Trade Gazette*, Freetown,” 24 September 1921. All in MGP, 9:315; 10:134–35, 342, 718.
  36. Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa*, trans. A. Keep (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1974), 275–78.
  37. PRO, CO 554/54/1512, Supporting Speech by Hon. Casely Hayford, British West African Conference, March 1920; Langley, *Pan-Africanism*, 125–33. SC-NYPL, Bruce Papers, Reel 1, Group A, Folder 7, H, 1–15, Hayford to Bruce, 24 November 1923; SC-NYPL, J.R. Ralph Casimir Papers, Sc MG 110, Box 1, Folder 8, Hayford to Casimir, 10 January 1925.
  38. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1970), 31–35; Lieutenant Governor of Côte d’Ivoire to Martial-Henri Merlin, 4 Dec 1921, MGP, 9:251–56; Article from *Cape Argus*, 5 January 1923, reprinted in NW, 24 February 1923, 10.
  39. BFMA, AF-1-17 (1884–1920), Lettre confidentielle du le Substitut, Colin, Lisala, à Monsieur le Procureur du Roi, 5 October 1920; BFMA, AI (A15) 1405 bis II/Q/3, Vice Governor General to the Minister of the Colonies, 2 August 1921, and Report by Governor General, 2 August 1921; BFMA, AA, AE/II No. 1375 (3240), “Not sur le mouvement Pan-Negre,” 1922; Martial-Henri Merlin, Governor-General of FWA, to Albert Sarraut, Minister of Colonies, Dakar, 27 July 1921; *Enclosure*: Jean Pourroy to Aujas, 17 June 1922; Pierre Jean Henri Didelot to Governor-General of French West Africa, Saint-Louis, 4 July 1922; “Article in *Congo* (Brussels),” April 1922. All in MGP, 9:111–12, 463, 501–11; 10:405.
  40. Moulin to Henri Jaspard, in MGP, 10:30. On the “invasion” of skilled workers, see Martial-Henri Merlin, Governor-General of French West Africa, to Albert Sarraut, Minister of Colonies, Dakar, 27 July 1921, MGP, 9:111. For evidence of ongoing Garveyist penetration into the Belgian Congo, see BFMA, AF-1-17 (1921), letter from Cartier to Jaspard, 29 June 1921; PRO, CO 583/109, letter from G. Ashie-Nikoi, c/o S.A. des Huileries du Congo Belge to General Agent, Black Star Line, 18 February 1922; A. Earnsure Johnson, “The New Belgian Congo,” NW, 14 October 1922, 6.
  41. Martial-Henri Merlin to Albert Sarraut, 27 July 1921; Lieutenant Governor of Côte d’Ivoire to Martial-Henri Merlin, 4 December 1921. Both in MGP, 9:111, 9:251–56.
  42. “Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Dakar UNIA Branch,” 7 May 1922; Wilfred A. Wilson et al., Rufisque UNIA Branch, to Secretary-General of the UNIA, 3 June 1922. Both in MGP, 9: 418, 442.
  43. *Enclosure*: Speech by John Farmer and Toasts at Farewell Banquet for John Kamara, Rufisque, 24 May 1922, MGP, 9:466–68.
  44. Letter from Pierre Jean Henri Didelot, Saint-Louis, to Gov-General of FWA, 4 July 1922, MGP, 9:501–11; PRO, FO 115/2766, R.C.F. Maugham to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 17 August 1922.
  45. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, eds., *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1974), 156. This passage was brought to my attention by Vumbi Yoka Mudimbe, *Parables and Fables: Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Central Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 26.
  46. For World War I in the Belgian Congo, see Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880–1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010),

- 142–45; David Van Reybrouck, *Congo: The Epic History of a People*, trans. Sam Garrett (New York: Ecco [an imprint of HarperCollins], 2014), 131–39. For a useful survey of the impact of the war in Africa, see Melvin E. Page, ed., *Africa and the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).
47. For the story of the Congo Free State, see Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998). For a good summary of the trauma's visited on the Lower Congo by during the first three decades of Belgian rule, see Covington-Ward, *Gesture and Power*, 78–80. MacGaffey is cited in this text.
48. Mudimbe, *Parables and Fables*, 5. For a discussion of the meaning and uses of “madness” in the colonial context, see Bogues, *Black Heretics*, 17–18, 157. For the “long conversation, see Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, 2 Vols.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991–1997).
49. MacGaffey, *Modern Kongo Prophets*, 103.
50. According to D. J. MacKay, Kimbangu “found the way of faith” in 1914 or 1915, and was baptized, with his wife, in July 1915. See MacKay, “Simon Kimbangu and the BMS Tradition,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 17, no. 2 (1987), 124–25. See also MacGaffey, *Modern Kongo Prophets*, 102–04; Mahaniah, “Presence,” 411–12.
51. For a detailed discussion of Kongo traditions of messianic renewal, the Pentecost of the Congo, and the relationship of both to Kimbanguism, see Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 250–55.
52. MacGaffey, *Custom*, 252–55; MacGaffey, *Modern Kongo Prophets*, 180; MacKay, “Simon Kimbangu,” 117–24.
53. Damaso Feci argues that nothing did more to shape the course of Kimbangu's ministry before 1921 than his time working in Léopoldville. Feci, “Vie cachée,” 13.
54. At his trial, Kimbangu admitted to having a relationship with a black American while he was working in Léopoldville. See Jeanne Maquet-Tombu, *Le Siècle marche; Vie du Chef congolais Lutunu*, 2nd ed. (Brussels: Office de publicité, 1952), 144.
55. The Congomen were, in the words of the Vice Governor General, “poisoned by Garveyism.” BFMA, AI (A15) 1405bis II/Q/3, Vice Governor General to Minister of the Colonies, 2 August 1921. See also M. W. Kodi, “The 1921 Pan-African Congress at Brussels: A Background to Belgian Pressures,” in *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, ed. Joseph E. Harris, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1993), 276; Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 49.
56. BFMA, AI (A15) 1405 bis II/Q/3, Memo by Governor General, 39B, 2 August 1921; Lettres 2787 du 23.7.21 de CDD Moyen-Congo à Progou (Congo-Kasai), in Raymaekers and Desroche, *L'Administration*, 83–84; Mackay, “Simon Kimbangu,” 125, 149; Feci, “Vie cachée,” 29.
57. The most famous of these prophets was Kimpa Vita (Dona Beatriz). See Aurélien Mokoko Gampiot, *Kimbanguism: An African Understanding of the Bible*, trans. Cécile Coquet-Mokoko (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2017), 46–48. For a discussion of female prophetism during the precolonial period and during Kimbangu's revival, see Yolanda Covington-Ward, “‘Your Name is Written in the Sky’: Unearthing the Stories of Kongo Female Prophets in Colonial Belgian Congo, 1921–1960,” *Journal of Africana Religions*, 2, no. 3 (2014): 317–46.
58. Covington-Ward, *Gesture and Power*, 11, 84, 93–94.
59. Account of Nyuvudi Paul, in Vellut, *Simon*, 67–85; Andersson, *Messianic*, 61; Lettres 2787 du 23.7.21 de CDD Moyen-Congo à Progou (Congo-Kasai), in Raymaekers and Desroche, *L'Administration*, 83–84.

60. F. Jodogne, “Le Mouvement Pan-Nègre,” reproduced in Zana Aziza Etambala, “Les missionnaires rédemptoristes face au mouvement Kimbanguiste: 1921–1925,” *Bulletin de l’Institut historique belge de Rome* LXIV (1994): 207; Buell, *Native*, 2: 604.
61. Aurélien Mokoko Gamptot, “Reading Black Identity: Kimbanguism and the Bible,” in *Refractions of the Scriptural: Critical Orientation as Transgression*, edited by Vincent L. Wimbush (New York: Routledge, 2016), 141–42.
62. This argument is convincingly developed in Mackay, “Simon Kimbangu,” 113–54. As Covington-Ward puts it, “If the Kongo people can receive visions and the Holy Spirit in their bodies, and hear the voice of God themselves, what need do they have for European missionaries to interpret for them?” See Covington-Ward, *Gesture and Power*, 89.
63. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1970), 6.
64. George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915* (Blantyre: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Page, “Introduction,” and James K. Matthews, “Reluctant Allies: Nigerian Responses to Military Recruitment, 1914–1918,” in *Africa and the First World War*, 7, 100–02; Mahir Saul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).
65. Vansina, *Being Colonized*, 264; Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies, and Reverie in Colonial Congo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), chapter 2.
66. “Strike Influenza,” *The Messenger*, November, 1920, 5; Manela, *Wilsonian Moment*, 4–13; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 380–90.
67. Sir F. D. Lugard, “The Colour Problem,” *Edinburgh Review* 233, no. 476 (1921): 280–81. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins note that British policymakers, conceding that the status quo in South Asia could not hold, redoubled their energies in Africa with a “crusading zeal.” Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688–2000*, 2nd ed. (Harlow, England: Routledge, 2002), 406–07.
68. E. D. Morel, *The Black Man’s Burden* (Manchester: National Labour Press, 1920), 179–80. For an account of Morel’s leadership in the Congo Reform Association, see Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*.
69. For a discussion of postwar conceptions of imperialism among “liberal imperialists,” see Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 173–204.
70. For an analysis of the ways in which colonial authorities “invented” tribal hierarchies and authority in Africa, see Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
71. F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922), 617.
72. Lothrop Stoddard, *The Revolt against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 30–44, 238–40. For representative works of this genre, see Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color*; Maurice Muret, *Le crépuscule des nations blanches (The Twilight of the White Races)* (Paris: Negro Universities Press, 1925); Basil Mathews, *The Clash of Colour: A Study in the Problem of Race* (New York: Edinburgh House Press, 1924).
73. Stoddard, *Rising Tide of Color*, vi; Warren G. Harding, “Address of the President of the United States at the Celebration of the Semicentennial Founding of the City of Birmingham, Alabama, October 26, 1921” (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1921), 6–8; Lugard, “The Colour Problem,” 283.

74. For a discussion of the establishment of “crustaceous borders” in the era of high nationalism, see Mae M. Ngai, “Nationalism, Immigration, Control, and the Ethnoracial Remapping of America in the 1920s,” *OAH Magazine of History* (July 2007), 12.
75. PRO, WO/106/259, Captain J.E. Phillips, “Africa for Africans and Pan-Islam,” 1917.
76. BFMA, AF-1-17 (1884-1920), Sir H. H. Johnston, “Our Rule in East Africa: A Grave Indictment,” *Observer*, 15 August 1920; Rudolf Asmis, “Africa—a World Problem,” *NW*, 18 March 1922, 4; “Strong Anti-White Wave Sweeps Continent of Africa,” *NW*, 15 April 1922, 3; A. H. Maloney, “The Heart of Africa is Throbbing—Throbbing with Revolt!” *NW*, 15 April 1922.
77. The *Negro World* was banned throughout French West Africa on January 14, 1922. It was banned in Nyasaland (Malawi) on March 24, Nigeria in June, the Gambia in September, and the Gold Coast in December, all in 1922. In Sierra Leone, the paper was “not absolutely prohibited” but “strictly controlled,” and only a few copies were allowed to circulate. In the Belgian Congo, officials were informally empowered to suppress Garveyite materials in mid-June 1921; the *Negro World* was officially suppressed in April 1922. See Robert A. Hill, “Introduction,” MGP, 9:xlvi; Pierre Jean Henri Didelot to Governor-General of FWA, 4 July 1922, MGP 9:510; PRO, CO 267/600/26912, Acting Governor, Sierra Leone, to Duke of Devonshire, 28 May 1923; Henri Jaspar to Louis Franck, 30 June 1921, MGP, 9:49–50; Report by Special Agent J.T. Fourny, 7 June 1921, MGP 3:459.
78. Hermann Norden, *Fresh Tracks in the Belgian Congo: from the Uganda Border to the Mouth of the Congo* (London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1924), 64. Nancy Rose Hunt argues that the “nervous state” of the Belgian colonial enterprise can be rooted in the exigencies of post-atrocity governance. See Hunt, *The Nervous State*.
79. Garvey was joined in his enthusiasm for Stoddard’s “rising tide of color” thesis by other members of Harlem’s New Negro intelligentsia. After reading Stoddard’s book, Hubert Henry Harrison entered into a correspondence with Stoddard, congratulating him for identifying the crisis facing the white race with such clarity.
80. Examples of this rhetoric are too numerous to list, but see, for example: *Negro World*, August 1, 1925, 2; *Negro World*, March 19, 1927, 2; *Negro World*, *Negro World*, March 24, 1928, 2; *Negro World*, April 28, 1928, 2; *Negro World*, July 18, 1925, 2; *Negro World*, April 9, 1921, 10; *Negro World*, July 4, 1925, 7.
81. Rapport no. 322 du 17.5.21 de A.T. Thysville à CDD, in Raymaekers and Desroche, *L’Administration*, 51–55; BFMA, AI (A15) 1405 bis 11/Q/3, “Report on Kimbangu, 23 June 1921” (translation mine).
82. Andersson, *Messianic*, 63–64. For an account that explicitly reads Kimbangu’s arrest and subsequent persecution as a parallel to the trials of Jesus Christ, see Jules Chomé, *La passion de Simon Kimbangu, 1921–1951* (Brussels: Les Amis de Présence africaine, 1959).
83. PRO, CO 536/138/10282, letter from A.T. Léon Morel to Reverend Lanyon Jennings, Kamba, 6 June 1921; Rev R. Lanyon Jennings to Mr. Wilson, BMS Wathen, 18 June 1921; Rev. George Thomas to A.J. Wallach, BMS Thysville, 27 July 1921; Mabwaaka Mpaka Gabriel, “A Prophet Dictates His Autobiography,” in *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire*, edited by John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1974), 60.
84. PRO, CO 536/138/10282, letter from Rev. George Thomas to A. J. Wallach, 27 July 1921, and Rev. R. Lanyon Jennings to Monsieur Morel, L’Administrateur Territorial, Thysville, 25 July 1921; Lerrigo, “Africa,” 133; Lerrigo, *Rock-Breaker*, 92.
85. A. Brenez, “Soyons Fermes: Imposons le Respect du Blanc,” *L’Avenir Colonial Belge*, 14 August 1921, 1; PRO CO 536/138/10282, MacGregor to British Ambassador to Belgium, 21 November 1924; Maquet-Tombu, *Le Siècle*, 142–43. In English, the song reads: “The country, yes, the country will change, / It is true. / The apostles of this idea will rise, / On the day assigned by the Savior. . . . Let everyone shed the mourning cloth (indigo) / And

take the white loincloth of joy! . . . In the hope that the whites will go away! / This is the last tax we pay!”

86. Mabie, a missionary for the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS), is quoted in Covington-Ward, *Gesture and Power*, 104.
87. Belgian Foreign Ministry Archives, Brussels (BFMA), AI (A15) 1405 bis II/Q/3, Lettre de M. le Gouverneur-Général, (translation mine); Cecilia Irvine, “Birth,” 47. Livrets were work cards carried by Africans in the Belgian Congo that offered proof of “good standing.”
88. Rev. Thomas Moody, quoted in NW, October 27, 1923, 2.
89. J. Nyrén, “Bland skördemän i Kongo (1922),” in *Simon Kimbangu 1921: de Predication a la Deportation: Les Sources*, edited by Jean-Luc Vellut (Brussels: Academie Royale des Sciences D’Outre-Mer, 2005), 98; Rapports 165 et 171 du 19 et 20.6.21 de A.T. Luozi à CDD Boma, in Raymaekers and Desroche, eds., *L’Administration et le Sacré*, 69; Gampiot, *Kimbanguisme*, 61.
90. Recorded by F. Jodogne and quoted in “Le Mouvement Pan-Nègre,” in Etambala, “Les missionnaires rédemptoristes face au mouvement Kimbanguiste,” 204. I have translated the chant into English.
91. A. Walder, “Ngunzarörelsen i Kongo (1922),” in *Simon Kimbangu 1921: de Predication a la Deportation: Les Sources*, edited by Jean-Luc Vellut (Brussels: Academie Royale des Sciences D’Outre-Mer, 2005), 104; Maquet-Tombu, *Le Siècle*, 141.
92. Some reports suggest that as his revival expanded, as the expectations of his followers grew, and as Belgian authorities moved to suppress his nascent movement, Kimbangu himself began invoking the prophecy of American liberation. A Luozi, in June, a clerk in the administrative service, reported Kimbangu publicly declaring, “for many years the Belgians have been our leaders and have done nothing for us, but soon the Americans will arrive to make war with the Belgians and become our leaders.” In September, the Chief of Kingoi claimed that Kimbangu told him that even hundreds of arrests would not halt the movement because the Americans were coming. See Report by A.T./Luozi, 13 June 1921 (translation mine); Report by A.T./Luozi, 3 September 1921. Both cited in Irvine, “Birth,” 43, 53. The Congolese sociologist and son of a Kimbanguist pastor, Aurélien Mokoko Gampiot, reports that Kimbangu did prophesize the return of black Americans in the course of African liberation. See Gampiot, “Reading Black Identity,” 144.
93. BFMA, AI (A15) 1405 bis II/Q/3, Lettre de M. le Gouverneur-Général, 23 June 1921; Irvine, “Birth,” 43; W. Reynolds, interview with Efraim Andersson, quoted in Andersson, *Messianic*, 254.
94. “The Slave Trade,” in *An Anthology of Kongo Religion*, 38–39; Wyatt MacGaffey, “Kongo and the King of the Americans,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 6, no. 2 (1968): 172–74; Mackay, “Simon Kimbangu,” 117–18, 138–44.
95. MacGaffey, “Kongo,” 177; Macquet-Tombu, *Le Siècle*, 148; Buell, *Native*, 2:603; Kodi, “The 1921 Pan-African Congress,” 278–79.
96. Buell, *Native*, 2:604.
97. Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements*, 67.
98. Macgregor to British Ambassador to Belgium, 6 August 1925, PRO, CO 536/138/41490; Andersson, *Messianic*, 68–70.
99. Letter from the Governor General, 33B, 12 July 1921, BFMA, AI (A15) 1405 bis II/Q/3; Norden, *Fresh Tracks*, 148.
100. In October 1921, Garvey cited the agitation in the Belgian Congo as an example of the impact that the “tutelage” of Garveyist organizing was reaping in Africa. See “Transcript of a Speech by Marcus Garvey at Liberty Hall,” NW, October 29, 1921, 2. Mary Rolinson similarly notes the manner in the needs and exigencies of organizing in the American South transformed the politics and rhetoric of the UNIA. See Rolinson, *Grassroots*



*Garveyism: The UNIA in the Rural South, 1920–1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 15.

101. Marcus Garvey at Liberty Hall, NW, 14 April 1923, 2.
102. Report of Speech by Ernest Wallace, 23 December 1925, MGP, 10:351–52.
103. Marcus Garvey, “The Silent Work That Must Be Done,” 16 November 1924, MGP, 6:42–46.
104. Marcus Garvey at Liberty Hall, NW, 14 April 1923, 2; Marcus Garvey at Liberty Hall, NW, 17 March 1923, 1.

### **About the Author**

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